

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended): A connecting structure comprising:

a first member; and

a second member,

wherein the first member has a peripheral wall portion that includes an outer end face and a stepped portion engaged with the second member,

wherein the peripheral wall portion includes a thin-shaped deformed portion that is ~~deformed radially inwardly with respect to the stepped portion of the first member~~ defined by a groove formed in the outer end face of the peripheral wall portion,

wherein the deformed portion is ~~a cut section of the peripheral wall portion~~ inclined and curved inwardly toward the step portion such that an inner surface of the deformed portion is formed in a concave shape and an outer surface of the deformed portion is formed in a convex shape,

wherein the deformed portion is positioned axially within the outer end-surface face of the peripheral wall portion, and

wherein the inner surface of the deformed portion abuts ~~has a concave face abutting~~ the second member.

2. (Currently Amended): A connecting structure of a pipe connected to a passage formed in a member, comprising:

a projection portion that projects from the pipe radially outwardly;

a recess portion that is provided at an open end of the passage formed in the member and that receives the projection portion of the pipe,

wherein the recess portion is defined by a peripheral wall portion that includes a thin-shaped deformed portion that is ~~deformed radially inward~~ defined by a groove formed in an outer end face of the peripheral wall portion,

wherein the deformed portion is ~~a cut section of the peripheral wall portion inclined and curved inwardly toward the recess portion such that an inner surface of the deformed portion is formed in a concave shape and an outer surface of the deformed portion is formed in a convex shape,~~

wherein the deformed portion is positioned axially within an outer end surface of the peripheral wall portion and is engaged with the projection portion, and

wherein the projection portion of the pipe, which is inserted into the opening end of the passage in the member, abuts the inner surface ~~a concave face~~ of the deformed portion.

3. (Previously Presented): The connecting structure of a pipe according to claim 2,

wherein the projection portion has an annular shape on an outer periphery of the pipe,

wherein the recess portion has an annular shape on an outer periphery of the passage in the member, and

wherein the peripheral wall portion is deformed inwardly in a continuous annular shape.

4. (Previously Presented): The connecting structure of a pipe according to claim 2,

wherein the projection portion has an annular shape on an outer periphery of the pipe,

wherein the recess portion has an annular shape on an outer periphery of the passage in the member, and

wherein the peripheral wall portion is bent and deformed inwardly at intermittent sections in a circumferential direction.

5. (Withdrawn): A connecting method for connecting a pipe to a passage formed in a member, comprising:

- a first step of inserting the pipe in the passage formed in the member and receiving a flange portion formed on an outer periphery of the pipe in a recess portion formed at an open end of the passage in the member; and
- a second step of, while cutting a peripheral wall portion of the recess portion in a thin shape, bending and deforming the cut portion of the peripheral wall portion inwardly to engage the inwardly bent and deformed peripheral wall portion with the projection portion.

6. (Withdrawn): The connecting method according to claim 5, wherein the second step is achieved by pressure-piecing a blade portion that has an inclined face portion into a peripheral edge of the recess portion.

7. (Withdrawn): The connecting method according to claim 6, wherein the flange portion and the recess portion are annular, and wherein the blade portion is continuously formed in an annular shape.

8. (Withdrawn): The connecting method according to claim 6, wherein the flange portion and the recess portion are annular, and wherein the blade portion is formed in plural sections intermittently in a circumferential direction.

9. (Withdrawn): A die used for connecting a pipe to a passage formed in a member, comprising:

- a cylindrical blade tool that has a continuous annular blade portion, and
 - a die main body that fixes the cylindrical blade tool,
- wherein the cylindrical blade tool is configured to be divided into a plurality of divided bodies such that the pipe is insertable into a hollow portion of the cylindrical blade tool.

10. (Withdrawn): The die according to claim 9,
wherein the blade tool is provided in order to connect a plurality of pipes by the number corresponding to the number of the pipes, and
wherein the blade tools adjacent to each other are fixed in the die main body so that blade portions thereof have been circumscribed.

11. (Withdrawn): A die used for connecting a pipe to a passage formed in a member, comprising:
a cylindrical blade tool that has a plurality of intermittent blade portions extending in a circumferential direction, and
a die main body that fixes the cylindrical blade tool,
wherein the cylindrical blade tool is provided with a long groove that allows insertion of a pipe between two blade portions adjacent in a circumferential direction.

12. (Withdrawn): The die according to claim 11,
wherein the blade tool is provided in order to connect a plurality of pipes by the number corresponding to the number of the pipes, and
wherein the blade tools adjacent to each other are fixed in the die main bodies in a state that blade portions thereof have been circumscribed.

13. (Withdrawn): The connecting method according to claim 6, wherein the blade portion includes the inclined face portion, an outer face portion, and a blade edge that is continuous with the inclined face portion and the outer face portion.

14. (Withdrawn): The connecting method according to claim 13, wherein the outer face is substantially parallel to an axial line of the blade portion.

15. (Withdrawn): The connecting method according to claim 13, wherein the blade edge has a flat surface that is substantially perpendicular to the axial line of the blade portion.

16. (Currently Amended): A connecting structure comprising:
a first member; and
a second member,
wherein the first member has a peripheral wall portion that includes an outer end face and a stepped portion engaged with the second member,
wherein the peripheral wall portion includes a thin-shaped deformed portion that is defined by a cutting groove formed in the outer end face and that is deformed inwardly with respect to the stepped portion of the first member,
wherein ~~the deformed portion has a~~ an outer face of the deformed portion is formed in a convex shape ~~outer face and an inner face that abuts~~ of the deformed portion is engaged with the second member.

17. (Currently Amended): The connecting structure according to claim 16, wherein the inner face of the ~~deformed peripheral wall~~ deformed portion is formed in a ~~has a~~ concave shape.

18. (Currently Amended): A connecting structure of a pipe connected to a passage formed in a member, comprising:
a projection portion that projects from the pipe radially outwardly;
a recess portion that is provided at an open end of the passage formed in the member and that receives the projection portion of the pipe,
wherein the recess portion is defined by a peripheral wall portion that includes a thin-shaped deformed portion,
wherein the deformed portion: (a) is defined by a cutting groove formed in an outer end face of the peripheral wall portion at a distance from the recess portion, and (b) is deformed radially inward with respect to the recess portion, and
wherein an outer face of the deformed portion is formed in a ~~(e) has a convex shape~~ outer face and an inner face of the deformed portion is ~~that is engaged with and abuts the~~ projection portion.

19. (Currently Amended): The connecting structure according to claim 18, wherein the inner face of the ~~peripheral wall~~ deformed portion is formed in a ~~has a~~ concave shape.